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# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8160**th meeting

Thursday, 18 January 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

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| *President*: | President Nazarbayev/Mr. Abdrakhmanov | (Kazakhstan) |
| *Members*: | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Llorentty Soliz |
| | China | Mr. Wu Haitao |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| | Ethiopia | Mr. Alemu |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Kuwait | Mr. Al Sabah |
| | Netherlands | Mr. Van Oosterom |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | President Duda |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Lavrov |
| | Sweden | Mr. Skoog |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Field |
| | United States of America | Mrs. Haley |

## Agenda

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Confidence-building measures

Letter dated 2 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/4)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**

**Confidence-building measures**

**Letter dated 2 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/4)**

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to warmly welcome His Excellency President Andrzej Duda of the Republic of Poland, the Secretary-General, Ministers and other distinguished representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence here today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate President Duda on the start of Poland's non-permanent membership of the Security Council. I look forward to fruitful cooperation with his delegation. I also congratulate the delegations of Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, the Netherlands and Peru on their accession to the Council this year as non-permanent members. I very much hope that we will work together productively in this critical organ of the United Nations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/4, which contains the text of a letter dated 2 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

**The Secretary-General**: I am pleased to join the members of the Security Council for this timely debate, and I thank the Republic of Kazakhstan for convening it. Kazakhstan has a proud tradition of support for a world free of weapons of mass destruction and for the global non-proliferation regime. I thank President Nursultan Nazarbayev for his personal leadership on this vital issue. Kazakhstan's contributions include rejecting the possession of nuclear weapons and founding the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

The Council, too, is instrumental in preventing the spread and use of weapons of mass destruction. As the Council declared in 1992 at its first Head of State-level summit on the issue (see S/PV.3046), the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Confidence-building measures such as resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), on negative security assurances, helped pave the way, respectively, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to its indefinite extension. However, despite the Council's efforts, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction remains — and, indeed, seems to be gathering force.

Global anxieties about nuclear weapons are at the highest level since the Cold War. The situation on the Korean peninsula is the most tense and dangerous peace-and-security challenge in the world today. I remain deeply concerned about the growing risk of military confrontation and the unimaginable consequences that would result. I welcome the firm decisions that the Security Council has taken in response to nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in defiance of Security Council resolutions. They must be fully implemented.

The Council's unity also creates an opportunity for diplomatic engagement. As I said to the General Assembly this week, I welcome the reopening of inter-Korean communication channels, especially military-to-military. That is critical to lower the risk of miscalculation or misunderstanding and to reduce tensions. I am also encouraged by the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to participate in the upcoming Winter Olympics in the Republic of Korea. We need to build upon those small signs of hope and expand diplomatic efforts to achieve the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in the context of regional security.

Elsewhere, trust on nuclear and other issues between the United States and the Russian Federation continues to ebb. Vital strategic arms-reduction measures established during and after the Cold War are under threat. There seems to be no appetite to negotiate new nuclear arms arsenal-reduction treaties after the expiration of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, in 2021. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, on the

Iranian nuclear programme, is also being questioned. That multilateral agreement, which is in the interests of the Iranian people and of the international community at large, should be preserved.

In the Syrian conflict, the use of chemical weapons seriously challenges the global taboo against those weapons of mass destruction. If the use of chemical weapons in Syria is once again determined to have taken place, the international community will need to find an appropriate way to identify those responsible and hold them to account. Without such an avenue, we would be allowing the use of chemical weapons to take place with impunity. I hope the Council can return to unity on that issue.

The threats posed by weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery are taking place in an environment of increasing military budgets and the over-accumulation of weapons — and they are coupled with a serious growth in regional tensions. In such a geopolitical context, confidence-building measures that support arms control, non-proliferation and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction are extremely important. By increasing understanding of others' positions and allowing information-sharing on, for example, military budgets, strategic outlooks and troop movements, they can help to decrease tension and avert conflict

In the case of the Biological Weapons Convention, which does not have a formal verification mechanism, a system of confidence-building measures has contributed to enhancing transparency. Those measures are intended to "prevent or reduce the occurrence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions" through the provision of annual information on national biodefence programmes, high-containment laboratories, legislative frameworks, and vaccine production. Unfortunately, participation has been less than satisfactory, with fewer than half of all States parties regularly providing information. For the measures to be truly effective, States must take full advantage of their benefits.

Trust is essential, but confidence can be undermined by bellicose rhetoric, confrontational approaches, the absence of communication channels, and inflexible positions. Engaging in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control measures are in and of themselves confidence-building. By removing the threat posed by weapons, arms-control and non-proliferation mechanisms provide the breathing space for dialogue, boost confidence in parties' intentions and lay the groundwork for building the trust necessary to end conflicts.

Nowhere was that more apparent than in the ground-breaking arms-control agreements of the late 1980s and early 1990s that contributed to the peaceful end to the Cold War. It is therefore alarming to see historic accords such as the Treaty on Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces and the Open Skies Treaty under question. Effective verification mechanisms have proved to be some of the most successful and enduring types of confidence-building measures. From the ground-breaking verification protocols of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty to the invaluable work undertaken by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, verification builds confidence. In that context, I welcome the establishment of a group of governmental experts on nuclear disarmament verification.

Effective verification requires support for the entities tasked with monitoring and verification, in order to ensure that they can fulfil their duties in an impartial and professional manner. It also requires understanding that non-proliferation challenges are not static. The measures we use to overcome them need to evolve in tandem with the implementation of disarmament commitments.

I believe that the United Nations can play a central role in assisting Member States in developing, augmenting and supporting confidence-building measures. The United Nations position as an honest broker allows us to act as a venue in which all parties can engage in dialogue, whether for the development of new norms and values or to resolve existing disputes and promote understanding.

Going forward, the Security Council in particular can provide leadership by demonstrating unity and continuing to highlight the importance of dialogue and diplomacy as an essential means for building confidence. A measure that all Member States can undertake is the universal and complete implementation of all disarmament and non-proliferation obligations. I appreciate the fact that, due to resource and other constraints, the implementation of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation commitments can prove difficult for some Member States. I therefore call on all States able to do so to provide the necessary capacity-building assistance.

The development of practical confidence-building measures is an important means of achieving the United Nations mandate to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. However, they are not an end in themselves. Preventing, mitigating and resolving conflict requires comprehensive political solutions that include dialogue and negotiation and, in cases involving weapons of mass destruction, verifiable disarmament and non-proliferation. I believe that the current international situation underscores the need to reframe and modernize long-standing disarmament and non-proliferation priorities. Deepening divisions and persistent stagnation in this field are exacerbating international tensions and creating new dangers.

As a contribution to reversing these trends, I intend to explore opportunities to generate new direction and impetus for the global disarmament agenda. I look forward to engaging with stakeholders on these issues in the months ahead.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and for his robust support for the agenda of today's meeting.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as President of Kazakhstan.

(*spoke in Kazakh; English interpretation provided by the delegation*)

I am glad to welcome everyone to this thematic briefing. We consider Kazakhstan's election as a non-permanent member and accession to the presidency of the Security Council to be signs of the international community's trust in our country and our peaceful policy, in particular members that have supported our position. As the first State of Central Asia to undertake this noble mission, we have become the voice of the countries of our region in this important organ of the global Organization.

A year has passed since Kazakhstan started its term in the Security Council. We have strived to be proactive, constructive and objective in addressing the pressing issues on the Council's agenda. While chairing the committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; and the committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea, we have made our contribution to their productive proceedings. I am grateful to all Council members for their continued cooperation.

(*spoke in Russian*)

Today's meeting is the flagship event of Kazakhstan's presidency of the Security Council, and is specifically dedicated to one of the most pressing topics on the contemporary global agenda. Confidence-building measures aimed at achieving the goals of peace and security play a key role in conflict prevention and the resolution of pressing global issues. At the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, I proposed the establishment of a regional structure for security and confidence-building measures in Asia. That mechanism was created as a result of thorough diplomatic action. The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia is now successfully functioning, bringing together 26 States of the region.

A quarter of a century later, I again address the United Nations on behalf of Kazakhstan, now a non-permanent member of the Security Council. However, I cannot help but say that question of increasing mutual confidence among some countries and at the global level remains urgent and is becoming ever more relevant. Confidence-building measures should remain on the agenda as the most important element in the maintenance of the global security architecture and the strengthening of peace at the global level. Why is that so?

First, confidence-building measures justified themselves in the process of preventing the threat of total destruction in the second half of the twentieth century, when humankind stood at the brink of a large-scale war. The Charter of the United Nations states that our main goal is to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Over a quarter of a century in the United Nations system, my country has made a sweeping transition from being an owner of the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal to being a leader of global non-proliferation, having closed the largest nuclear test site, Semipalatinsk. The renunciation of nuclear weapons and the status of a nuclear Power was our deliberate and sincere choice — a voluntary initiative supported by all the people of Kazakhstan and duly appreciated by the international community. Today our country is a party to all fundamental international treaties in the area of nuclear security and has legally enshrined its nuclear-free status.

Secondly, the atmosphere of mutual trust may facilitate the creation of a new model of international cooperation. A shining example and a practical embodiment of such cooperation was the opening last year of the International Atomic Energy Agency Low-Enriched Uranium Bank. With this, Kazakhstan has made yet another contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime and the safe use of uranium for peace purposes.

Thirdly, Kazakhstan's nuclear-free status may serve as an example and practical guidance to other countries. I say this on the basis of our own experience. We have built and strengthened our independent country and secured its high international standing specifically by renouncing nuclear weapons and obtaining non-aggression safeguards from nuclear Powers. We call on all other States to follow our example. We have called on Iran to do so, and now call on North Korea to follow suit. The way to counter the threat of nuclear weapons throughout the world is through trust.

Fourthly, the contemporary potential of progress in science and technology and the realities of globalization make the task of ensuring the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) a matter of humankind's survival. The increase in the number of countries possessing WMDs poses the risk of nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons falling into the hands of destructive forces. The current legal framework for nuclear security failed to prevent the expansion of the nuclear Powers club in the late twentieth century. I believe that the much-needed strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), will require deep shifts in thinking and new multilateral political solutions. I suggest the following measures to build confidence in the field of non-proliferation.

First, I believe that we should make withdrawal from the NPT more difficult. The example of North Korea may prompt similar action on the part of other countries with ambitions to possess nuclear weapons. Without casting doubt on the NPT, I propose that we consider the possibility of crafting a special Security Council draft resolution that clearly spells out the consequences for those countries that violate the Treaty, including sanctions measures and other coercive measures. We have seen the necessity of that. The NPT did not stop certain countries, such as India and Pakistan, in their aspiration to possess nuclear weapons.

Secondly, we must develop a truly effective mechanism for implementing tough measures to prevent the acquisition and proliferation of WMDs. Such multilateral agreements should be adopted through separate Security Council resolutions. As a primary measure to eliminate incentives to possess WMDs, I believe that it its necessary to develop a legally binding system of safeguards by nuclear Powers for those States that would voluntarily abandon possessing nuclear weapons, as well as non-nuclear-weapon States. That is fair and can be accomplished without great effort.

Thirdly, the success or failure of the process of modernizing the global security system directly depends on the international community's ability to overcome outdated militaristic mindsets. We should relegate to the past dividing countries into military blocs or alliances, a concept that has become both provocative and meaningless in the twenty-first century. In that specific regard, we require mutual trust among States, which is waning with every passing year. I have set out my vision for global anti-military measures in my "Manifesto: the world, the twenty-first century", which proposes initiatives facilitating the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world by the United Nations centenary. If that goal enjoys the support of the international community, I believe that it will be attainable.

Fourthly, we must revive political trust and systematic dialogue. A good illustration of that can be seen in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) — the agreement concerning Iran's nuclear programme — which has demonstrated the success attainable through multilateral diplomacy in the area of non-proliferation. That has become a practical example of resolving the most complicated issues through negotiations. That agreement was made possible thanks to an atmosphere of building trust to which Kazakhstan contributed by example, and showed what we have achieved, while earning the trust of the international community. I hope for the continued and successful implementation of the JCPOA despite recent complications vis-à-vis some parties to the agreement's failure to fulfil their obligations.

As the Council is aware, two days ago I met with the President of the United States, Mr. Trump. We discussed that issue, and I have an impression that, in principle, we can resolve it. In our view, a similar constructive approach could be used to settle the nuclear issue involving North Korea. As we all know, current

developments on the Korean peninsula are illustrative of profound contradictions. The world is deeply concerned. That problem can be resolved by restoring trust among the United States, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, which we also recently discussed at the White House. In that regard our positions converged. Without the participation of the United States, Russia and China, it would be difficult for us to resolve that issue. Accordingly, we call on stakeholders to reach a solution to the North Korean issue as expeditiously and constructively as possible. We advocate that the five nuclear-weapon States grant security assurances to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a key prerequisite for establishing an atmosphere of trust for Pyongyang to return to the negotiating table. Kazakhstan stands ready to engage in mediation and provide a platform for negotiations should the need arise among stakeholders.

Confidence-building measures are more relevant than ever for the Middle East, where tragic events are currently unfolding. The conflict in Syria is having negative repercussions extending far beyond the region. In that regard, it is important to note that mutual trust became the basis for the Astana talks, which, in so much as is possible, is contributing to the Syrian peace settlement process, while reinforcing the Geneva talks. Seven such meetings were held in Astana, and, as participants stated, those were all successful and helped to address issues.

Fifthly, in our view, one of the most effective measures in combating the proliferation of WMDs involves the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. That also constitutes the materialization of a form of collective trust. That was accomplished in Central Asia, and I hope that the nuclear Powers will recognize that step and ensure our protection. It is important to pursue efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. I call on stakeholders to resume their work, and hope that persistent disagreements remaining among certain countries will soon be overcome

Sixthly, there is now the risk of a new arms race involving scientific achievements. In that regard, the international community should strengthen control over the creation and proliferation of new military and information technologies. I believe that confidence-building measures are also necessary for forging common approaches aimed at preventing the militarization of outer space.

I believe that all the issues that I have just mentioned merit a stand-alone meeting of the United Nations to discuss everything that they entail, achieve a convergence of views among States and restore trust among them.

Today's realities are such that many conflicts can be prevented and effectively settled provided that there be mutual understanding and trust among the world's nuclear Powers. They bear the greatest responsibility before humankind to prevent a nuclear catastrophe. The largest nuclear Powers should constitute the vanguard in the struggle for a nuclear-weapon-free world and lead by an example in WMD reduction. That, however, does not mean that other countries should stand aside as if little depended upon them. On the other hand, if the great nuclear Powers state that they intend to maintain and strengthen their nuclear capacities and prevent others from acquiring the same, I believe that that will backfire. We must therefore work together.

The international community is strengthened by its diversity and pluralism, and can survive and flourish when there is balance and harmony among the nations and peoples living on our planet. For that very reason, we must strive together to achieve a safer world and a more equitable world order based upon the rule of international law. Undoubtedly, in that regard a special role and historic mission falls to the Security Council. I am convinced that in the twenty-first century humankind will be able to forge a dignified way towards a world free from the threat posed by WMDs. I believe that the trust, will power and intelligence of the international community amplified by the energy of collective action will prevent our planet from plunging into the abyss of a global catastrophe.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now call on the President of Poland.

**President Duda**: Let me start by thanking the Kazakh presidency for organizing this high-level debate on such an important and relevant topic. It shows Kazakhstan's long-lasting commitment to non-proliferation efforts. Kazakhstan's credibility in that matter is reinforced by the fact that it is one of a very few countries that has abandoned the nuclear path. I remember reading remarks by President Nazarbayev in which he stressed "that was the best decision I have ever made for my young country". And Kazakhstan's continued engagement in that regard

has been demonstrated many times ever since. Let me mention just the recent establishment of the Low Enriched Uranium Bank, which not only constitutes a major step towards promoting nuclear safety but also promotes transparency and builds confidence among peace-loving nations.

I also want to thank President Nazarbayev personally for inviting me to this debate. This is my first time, and most definitely not my last, visit to the Security Council as President of the Republic of Poland. I am here because the issue under consideration is very much connected to Poland's priorities in the Council, that is, supporting the existing and building new international law instruments to mitigate the unlawful and aggressive behaviour of some members of the international community. Let me stress that not only aggression, but also any attempt to build aggressive capabilities, should always be treated as a violation of international norms because, in the end, it leads to the erosion of the noble idea of the peaceful coexistence among States.

Peaceful cooperation among all States is the very essence of solidarity and lawfulness at the international level. That is why it is so important to further develop legal instruments in international relations, as well as the ability to enforce them. It also applies to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation. As members of the Security Council, we are committed to treating it with all the seriousness it deserves.

Despite having a developed and established legal and treaty architecture, non-proliferation and disarmament remain an unfinished project. At its core, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) can be seen as having a mixed record. I see three problems in that regard. First, there is no requirement for a country to join the Treaty, and those that do join have a potentially easy way out — they can withdraw from it with no more than three months' notice. Secondly, there is no framework under the Treaty for a sanctions regime to guard against Treaty violations. And, thirdly, although the Treaty allows for its signatories to pursue a nuclear strategy for peaceful purposes, the inspections procedure is based on voluntary cooperation and mutual trust. But, as we have seen throughout history, the world is not run by the gentlemen's agreement rule. In fact, world affairs are too often run by people who are anything but gentlemen.

Recent developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, broken assurances provided for Ukraine by the Budapest Memorandum, controversies over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, as well as threats posed by non-State actors, have all shown that the non-proliferation agenda is even more topical than ever today. And it does not apply only to military nuclear capabilities; chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missile proliferation2 are just as important.

With regard to chemical weapons, Poland finds it unacceptable that we are still confronted with the continued use of that type of arms. It is the responsibility of the Security Council to continue conveying a strong message to the world on that matter. Chemical weapons were used on a number of occasions since the 1960s by Egypt in Yemen, in the 1980s by Iraq against Iran and recently in Syria, but with no serious consequences for the side that used them — which is the problem.

Currently, however, the most worrisome situation seems to be the one on the Korean peninsula, where provocative actions taken by the North Korean regime not only destabilize the whole region but also undermine the entire non-proliferation effort. The stockpiling of chemical weapons, the development of military nuclear capabilities and ballistic missile programmes and provocative tests of those weapons are clear violations of international law in general, and of the respective Security Council resolutions in particular. Such actions show that the policy of aggression and confrontation overshadows the policy of open dialogue and trust. What is worse, they also show — creating a dangerous precedent — that running a policy based on the law of force, and not the force of law, sadly can be effective and can go unpunished.

The way in which we solve the crisis will have a significant impact on the future of the entire global non-proliferation architecture. I believe that the intensified efforts undertaken together by the international community will bring about a political solution and will result in the stabilization of the situation in the region. That is especially crucial today, as the 2018 Winter Olympics will soon begin in South Korea. That event should be celebrated in safe surroundings and allow for spectacular sport competition in an atmosphere of peace and friendship among all nations.

Poland has been a longstanding and active supporter of strengthening non-proliferation and disarmament norms and principles. We currently chair two important initiatives, namely, the second Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, the latter which we inherited from Kazakhstan in 2017.

Despite the concerns raised over the NPT, we believe it is the only real instrument that brings us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. The implementation of the Treaty is subject to review every five years. As its current guardian, Poland has the intention of focusing on maintaining its credibility as well as creating the environment for a mutually respectful, transparent and all-inclusive dialogue. Bearing in mind that the 2020 Review Conference will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, we would very much appreciate the support of the Security Council and of the United Nations in efforts to make it our common success.

Equally significant to global and regional security and stability is the proliferation of ballistic missiles, including those capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, the record of efforts aimed at curbing it is short. That is why the importance of control mechanisms has become even greater.

For 15 years since its establishment, The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation has been promoting transparency and confidence-building measures. As its Chair, Poland wishes to follow up by supporting the full implementation of the Code and strengthening its relationship with the United Nations, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 59/91, of 3 December 2004.

In closing, I would like to again express my gratitude to the Kazakh presidency for selecting such an important issue as the focus of today's debate. Poland will continue its commitment to making our world safe from nuclear threats. As we are all aware, the devastating aftermath of the use of weapons of mass destruction would transgress all borders. That is why we should work closely within the United Nations community to make sure that it never happens.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

**Mr. Al Sabah** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, I should like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and the friendly Republic of Kazakhstan on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. The choice of the topic for our debate today at the first high-level briefing of 2018 under the agenda item "Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: confidence-building measures" is extremely important to the international community and to members of the Security Council, which seek to safeguard the world from weapons of mass destruction in the interest of maintaining stability, peace and security in the region and the world. We affirm the full support of the State of Kuwait in carrying out your responsibilities and in fulfilling your mandate.

I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable briefing, which illustrates the need to promote confidence-building measures in the context of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in order to put an end to the threat that they represent. Disarmament and non-proliferation efforts are key to maintaining international peace and security.

The State of Kuwait attaches particular importance to all issues relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, which constitute the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I would like to reiterate the steadfast position of the State of Kuwait with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security and to disarmament issues, in particular its commitment to the NPT and the outcomes of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the NPT, in line with its absolute commitment to respecting international treaties and our belief in their usefulness. We also confirm that the best way to eliminate the danger and threat of nuclear weapons and to ensure their non-proliferation is the complete and holistic elimination of nuclear weapons as soon as possible. We call on nuclear-weapon States to eliminate such weapons, to meet their commitments under article VI of the NPT and to lead the efforts for the universal commitment to the Treaty, which remains the very cornerstone of the international security, and the basis of the current disarmament and non-proliferation structure.

In considering international initiatives and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, we must remember the challenges facing the Middle East region

with regard to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Unfortunately, the Middle East remains a flagrant example of the threat to the non-proliferation regime and to the selectivity of the Security Council in dealing with such threats. It is therefore no surprise that the region, and the Arab countries in particular, are experiencing an unprecedented level of frustration because of the ongoing failure to implement the agreed commitment to establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

That is highlighted in the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT and in the action plan adopted by the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Those documents remain relevant until the objectives are achieved. It is the responsibility of all parties to the Treaty to implement the resolution, in particular the nuclear-weapon States and the three States that deposited the Treaty and submitted the resolution on the Middle East in the context of the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

Our debate today reaffirms the seriousness with which the Security Council deals with the threat of weapons of mass destruction, which is not limited to the declaration of preventive measures under resolution 1540 (2004) but also addresses future threats if such measures fail. Any use or threat of use of those deadly weapons will have consequences and will cause untold destruction. The Security Council therefore unanimously adopted resolution 2325 (2016), which reaffirms that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and sets out a road map for the future work of States and the Committee pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) until 2021. We hope that that committee of the Security Council will become a standing committee, and not a temporary one, given its importance in preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Moreover, we once again condemn the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as affirmed by international reports. We are following with concern the ongoing allegations of the use of those internationally prohibited weapons by the warring parties. The inability of the Security Council to uphold the international mechanism to determine which party has used such weapons means that the perpetrators of such crimes will enjoy impunity. We must find alternative solutions and a new mechanism that enjoys the consensus of all Security Council members to ensure that such criminals are brought to justice and held responsible. We also support the work done by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, through its fact-finding mission, to investigate the allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Finally, I reiterate the steadfast, principled position of the State of Kuwait with regard to non-proliferation issues and its ongoing commitment to cooperating in order to achieve our people's aspiration to a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We look forward to the day when, together, we will once and for all get rid of these weapons. Nuclear accidents do not recognize national borders. They affect all parts of the world. Our world no longer needs any proof of that. We call on all States that bear special responsibility to maintain international peace and security and all nations that constantly state their commitment to respecting the Charter of the United Nations to take clear and honest measures in order to achieve the goal of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Lavrov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation welcomes the initiative of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to hold a special meeting of the Security Council on "Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: confidence-building measures". This is especially relevant given that on 1 July this year we will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which undergirds the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We believe firmly that the risks and threats we are encountering in this area today should be dealt with specifically on the basis of the Treaty, with a balanced approach to its three pillars — non-proliferation, disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear power.

Unfortunately, we are approaching that half-century milestone weighed down by contradictions that could complicate the current NPT review cycle, which will conclude with the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2020. Its main goals include confirmation of our commitment to the goals of the Treaty and our obligations under it, as well as its strengthening on the

basis of the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference. To that end, all countries must renounce the unwillingness to listen to one another that was so evident at the 2015 Review Conference — in particular in the misguided and dangerous trend prevailing at the time involving attempts to compel nuclear Powers to abandon their nuclear arsenals without accounting for their security interests or strategic realities.

That approach resulted in forced efforts to draft the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that is now open for signature. Russia does not intend to join the Treaty. We believe that the total eradication of nuclear weapons is possible only in a context of comprehensive, full disarmament, with equitable, equal and indivisible security for all, including those possessing nuclear weapons, as is provided for in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as presented for signature, are far from being based on those principles. It ignores the importance of taking into account every factor affecting our strategic stability today. It has given rise to profound disagreement among members of the international community and could have a destabilizing effect on the non-proliferation regime. I would like to stress that we embrace the goal of building a nuclear-weapon-free world. However, we cannot achieve that with the unilateral measures on which the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is based.

The prospects for the current review cycle also cast doubt on the lack of clarity regarding the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We believe that the conference convened to create such a zone remains relevant. For our part, we will continue to work to make progress in this process. We see a promise of success through consideration of the issue within the broader context of regional security. Russia's specific views in that regard are well known to all stakeholders and remain in force.

The status of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is another important issue. As a principal supporter of the Treaty, we call on all the countries on which its entry into force depends to sign and ratify it, as some of them have frequently promised to do. At the same time, it is still important to ensure the continuation of a moratorium on any nuclear explosions.

One of the crucial concrete steps aimed at maintaining the nuclear non-proliferation regime in its current phase is that of combining our efforts to sustainably implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) so as to resolve the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme. The Security Council supported the JCPOA through its unanimous adoption of resolution 2231 (2015) and therefore bears some responsibility for its implementation. Iran has complied strictly with its obligations, as the International Atomic Energy Agency has regularly confirmed. An overwhelming majority of the international community recognizes that the JCPOA is making a tangible contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime and maintaining international peace and security. We cannot repudiate this genuine achievement of multilateral diplomacy — the result of the efforts not only of the participants in the agreement itself but also of other stakeholders that supported the initiative, including Kazakhstan — for the benefit of certain countries' political agendas.

It is obvious that if the JCPOA were to fail, and especially if one of the members of the P5+1 was responsible, it would send an alarming message about our entire international security architecture, including the prospects for resolving the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula. We would like to reaffirm the relevance of Russia and China's proposals for a road map aimed at reaching an exclusively peaceful settlement of this issue.

We are gravely concerned about the growing threat of chemical terrorism in the Middle East, in particular in Iraq and Syria. Militants are not only using toxic chemicals but also have their own technological and manufacturing capacities for synthesizing full-fledged military toxic substances and have established far-reaching channels for access to their precursors. We should never ignore the very real threat of chemical terrorism spreading beyond the Middle East, particularly when we consider the significant numbers of foreigners who are fighting alongside the extremists. Terrorists who have come to Syria and Iraq from abroad have already had the opportunity to acquire practical experience and skills in manufacturing and using chemical weapons. For many years — the past three at least — we have repeatedly proposed adopting a Security Council resolution, or at least a presidential statement, condemning specific instances of chemical terrorism in Syria and Iraq. Unfortunately, all of our proposals have consistently met with obstinate

resistance from some of our Western colleagues, who prefer to turn a blind eye to the facts of the use, and even manufacture, of chemical weapons by terrorists, and to level unsubstantiated accusations at Damascus. We consider it unacceptable to exploit efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in order to achieve narrow geopolitical aims, as occurred 15 years ago with the intervention in Iraq on an utterly trumped-up pretext.

We have recently witnessed persistent attempts to manipulate the activity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which has concluded its work. This is deplorable, and we reiterate our proposal for creating a new mechanism for investigating incidents involving the use of chemical weapons in Syria on the basis of principles that fully reflect the standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We also call on all States to comply with their obligations under resolution 1540 (2004), adopted in 2004, which directs all countries to take effective measures to prevent weapons of mass destruction and all other related materials from falling into the hands of non-State actors, including terrorists, of course. The resolution's relevance was reaffirmed by the Security Council following the 2016 comprehensive review of its implementation. The Council is required to respond severely to any breach of the resolution, whether in Syria, Iraq or elsewhere, especially in cases where non-State actors receive assistance in getting access to weapons of mass destruction. Russia supports efforts to establish and strengthen the national, regional and subregional capacities needed for dealing with these challenges. Under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, we recently held a special seminar in Kaliningrad on the practical aspects of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Last year, during our chairmanship of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, we organized a special meeting on the issue. We also welcomed the consensus three months ago approving a decision by the OPCW Executive Council aimed at preventing threats of non-State actors using chemical weapons, which in our view is a step in the right direction.

In the interests of improving the effectiveness of multilateral cooperation in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the threat of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups and other non-State actors, Russia has proposed formulating a new, legally binding instrument, in the form of an international convention to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism. We presented the draft convention at the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva, and we call for negotiations for its approval to begin as soon as possible.

The current state of affairs in non-proliferation and disarmament urgently requires us to work together to find ways of surmounting these growing contradictions, while taking a careful approach to the cooperative measures that have been proven to be effective and strengthening their international legal foundations by taking the interests of all States into account. We hope that today's Security Council meeting and the initiative put forward by the President of Kazakhstan will help us to resolve these issues.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): In connection with the planned bilaterals, I am now obliged to leave this meeting. I will be replaced by Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Minister for Foreign of Kazakhstan. I genuinely thank the Secretary-General and all those who spoke today, including senior Government officials, Foreign Ministers of neighbouring countries, President Duda and Minister Lavrov. I thank them all for their interest and for the valuable proposals that have been put forward. I wish the Security Council the very best in its quest for peace on Earth.

**Mrs. Haley** (United States of America): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and his leadership in working to find enduring solutions to increasingly complex problems.

It is fitting that Kazakhstan has called this important meeting. One of Kazakhstan earliest decisions as an independent nation remains one of the most important moments in the history of non-proliferation. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan voluntarily removed Soviet nuclear weapons from its territory and joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. By rejecting nuclear weapons, President Nazarbayev set an example for the rest of the world. That action built confidence. It showed Kazakhstan's neighbours and the world that it was not a threat. It was a vote of confidence in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation effort. Critically, Kazakhstan's action

demonstrated that it valued peace and stability in its relations with other countries. It was an unmistakable concrete expression of Kazakhstan's willingness and readiness to be a responsible member of the community of nations.

The United States continues to lead in efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. We play a leading role in ensuring the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) — a landmark agreement that the Security Council unanimously adopted in 2004. Together with our partners, we work to assist States and international organizations in their efforts to prevent non-State actors from developing and acquiring nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems. But the reality is that today's security environment is more challenging than in the past. An essential element of further nuclear disarmament is successfully addressing fundamental security challenges.

The regimes that most threaten the world today with weapons of mass destruction are also the source of different kinds of security challenges. They deny human rights and fundamental freedoms to their people. They promote regional instability. They aid terrorists and militant groups. They promote conflict that eventually spills over their borders. There is no greater threat to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime than that posed by North Korea. North Korea continues its reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons, in defiance of repeated resolutions by the Council. It continues to pursue nuclear weapons while its people starve, and to threaten other nations, while intimidating its own citizens. The example that Kazakhstan set and the efforts of so many others to curb the spread of nuclear weapons will begin to unravel if the Council cannot rise to the challenge. We call on all Member States to fulfil their obligations and fully implement all Council resolutions on North Korea. We will continue to work with our partners in the Security Council in pursuit of a peaceful, diplomatic solution to the crisis. However, let me say it one more time: the United States remains fully committed to defending itself and its allies if necessary.

The actions of the Iranian regime are another example. The regime in Tehran is the leading cause of instability in an unstable part of the world. It supports terrorists, proxy militants and murderers like Bashar Al-Assad. It provides ballistic missiles in violation of United Nations arms embargoes. Its proxies launch them at civilian targets, as we saw when Houthi militias in Yemen fired an Iranian-supplied missile at an airport in Riyadh. When the Iranian people protest their money being diverted to terrorists, the regime arrests and kills them. It silences their voices and lies about their motivations. When the Council adopted resolution 2231(2015), it endorsed the nuclear agreement and retained its series of prohibitions on Iran's behaviour.

The Iranian regime has repeatedly violated those prohibitions and, in doing so, it has repeatedly shown itself to be unworthy of our trust and our confidence. When the Council considers the question of how we can promote trust that States will not engage in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the place we must start and the very least we can do is to insist that States comply with their existing international obligations. In the case of Iran, while the United States continues to uphold its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the international community must also demand that Iran fulfil its obligations under resolution 2231 (2015). We impose those obligations as the Security Council. Together we must respond to Iran's dangerous violations, not because we want the nuclear agreement to fail but because we want the cause of non-proliferation to succeed.

We must not forget that weapons of mass destruction are not just an abstract threat, but weapons that evil regimes will put to use. The Syrian regime has repeatedly used chemical weapons against its own people. They are the actions of a Government so corrupt that it stands with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) as the only entities to use chemical weapons as tools of warfare in the twenty-first century. The Security Council must respond to the outrageous violation of international law and basic human decency. The Council created the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for the express purpose of exposing the perpetrators of those crimes. The JIM determined that the Al-Assad regime and ISIS used chemical weapons in Syria. Both must be held accountable for their actions. However, one nation stands in the way of the Security Council fulfilling its duty. That nation is Russia.

It was Russia that vetoed three Council draft resolutions that would have renewed the Joint Investigative Mechanism. It is Russia that has gone to great lengths at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague to prevent the Al-Assad regime from being held accountable for its actions. If the Russian Government is serious about the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it will convince its client, Mr. Al-Assad, that he must

eliminate his chemical weapons and cooperate fully with OPCW and the United Nations.

The Security Council tackles some of the greatest challenges to international peace and security daily. None is greater than the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. The United States works hard to ensure the non-proliferation of such deadly weapons. We encourage the creation of a security environment that benefits non-proliferation. We believe all nations have a moral responsibility to join in the creation of that environment.

**Mr. Field** (United Kingdom): On behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom, may I warmly congratulate Kazakhstan on becoming the first Central Asian nation to steer and preside over the Security Council. As has been pointed out, its historic commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is well known. We welcome this important debate because our collective security and prosperity depend upon an effective global non-proliferation regime.

It is sometimes easy to forget just how recently the global community first coalesced around a common strategy in this sphere. There were very dark predictions made during the 1960s and the 1970s of a bleak world in which there would be dozens of nuclear armed States vying with each other. Yet today, thanks to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, that number of nuclear States remains in single figures.

Together we have painstakingly constructed a comprehensive set of rules, norms and standards that counter the proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. If the rule book that we have written together is to remain effective in this century, we must all meet our responsibilities to protect and implement our common rules, norms and standards, and we must hold those who breach them properly to account. The success or failure depends upon our ability to work together, and this is illustrated most recently by the examples of Iran, North Korea and Syria, which I shall now briefly discuss.

The threat of a nuclear Iran brought the international community — the Security Council — together to defend our commonly held rules and to protect our shared security interests. Through our painstaking joint diplomacy and accorded pressure, Iran finally came to the negotiating table. Collectively we agreed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which we in the United Kingdom continue steadfastly to support. We should always remember that before the deal, Iran could have produced enough fissile material for a weapon in a few months. Now all experts would suggest that this would take at least a year. All of us in the Security Council should be proud of this success that we achieved by working together. Let us continue this work.

On North Korea, rightly, we have had successes, not least because we have worked together. North Korea has repeatedly and continuously flouted our non-proliferation rules with deepening consequences for international security. We agreed that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's development of a nuclear programme is illegal and cannot be accepted. In response, the Council collectively has imposed the strictest sanctions in a generation with a number of Security Council resolutions. We may rest assured that these measures are already having an impact. The Security Council must, in my view, continue to stand united on both North Korea and Iran.

By contrast, the Security Council has not been as united in response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Regrettably, it has been Russia that has repeatedly wielded its veto in the Council, despite clear conclusions from an impartial independent expert investigation set up by the Council itself that the Syrian regime and Da'esh have repeatedly used chemical weapons. I fear that the Council's lack of unity and resolve on Syria sends the most dangerous possible signal of a confused message to would-be proliferators of the future. The Security Council must be prepared to hold all transgressors to account and the United Kingdom implores those in the Council who have stood in the way of action to join the consensus for the future.

The lesson for the Council could not be clearer. When we work together, we can persuade and cajole States to abandon their ambitions to obtain weapons of mass destruction. If we do not, it is the most vulnerable — civilians, often — who suffer and the security of the world is put at risk.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains a cornerstone of international security. Although the pace of non-proliferation and disarmament is often frustratingly slow, it is vital not to lose sight of the ambitious vision that the Treaty embodies. Its achievements stem from its development over time by consensus and because it has offered tangible benefits to each and everyone of its signatories. By contrast, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons would offer no solutions to the very complex security challenges that we face, nor in my view to the significant technical challenges of nuclear disarmament. That is why the United Kingdom will not become a party to the nuclear weapon-ban treaty. We do not consider that its prohibitions represent an emerging rule of customary international law.

The United Kingdom remains committed to a world without nuclear weapons. We believe that the best way to achieve this goal is through gradual multilateral disarmament, negotiated step by step, within existing frameworks. There is much more that we can do if we continue to work together. We can continue the voluntary moratoriums on nuclear weapon testing and also work for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We can prevent nuclear, chemical and biological material from falling into the hands of terrorists by working for full and effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), and we can tackle the threat of ballistic missiles by encouraging Member States to consider acceding or adhering to the missile technology control regime and the Hague Code of Conduct.

The Security Council has, as we know, a very special role to play in safeguarding international peace and security. As ever, it is the unity of the Security Council and the United Nations beyond that is vital. Together, we must continue working to prevent proliferation; together, we must hold to account those States that breach our rules; and together, we must persuade and cajole would-be proliferators to abandon their ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction. The United Kingdom remains ready to work closely with all members of the Security Council towards these important goals, which I believe are essential for the future security of humankind.

**Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a privilege to see you, Mr. President, presiding over this meeting of the Security Council. We are also honoured to have enjoyed the presence of His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. We take the opportunity to congratulate his country's delegation on the excellent work that it has done to date as President of the Security Council. We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing and his leadership on the subject that Kazakhstan chose for today's discussion.

Bolivia, in the context of its dedication to respecting international law and as a pacifist State that promotes a culture of peace and the right to peace, advocates the peaceful settlement of disputes, good offices, preventive diplomacy, multilateralism, non-interference and respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States as universal principles recognized by the international community, which are effective tools to avoid the scourge of war and its consequences.

We are meeting at a time when we are experiencing a reality of great tensions at the global level. Bolivia is concerned about the considerable number of armed conflicts, which carry heavy humanitarian cost. We have chosen the path of the culture of dialogue among nations through the peoples' diplomacy. In that regard, we stress the need to adopt a wide-ranging approach if we are to achieve peace and prevent conflicts by analysing their structural causes, strengthening the rule of law and promoting economic growth and social development.

Bolivia, which belongs to the first densely populated area in the world that declared itself free of nuclear weapons, through the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and to the first region to have declared itself a zone of peace — and thanks to the peace process, the last armed conflict in our region is being resolved in Colombia — has the authority to call for this example to be replicated in other parts of the world.

In that connection, we believe that the Members of our Organization have the great challenge to implement the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 7 July 2017. It is time for countries to commit to prohibiting the development, testing, production, procurement and possession of nuclear arsenals and explosives. We note the decision of countries such as Kazakhstan to abandon the possession of nuclear weapons from its defence doctrines and national security policies. In line with our support for non-proliferation, we reiterate our opposition to the carrying out of any type of nuclear test or launching of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. We call for the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of all nuclear programmes without peaceful ends and all ballistic missiles.

In that regard, we believe that the best preventive measure is the elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As such, in the specific context of the conflict on the Korean peninsula, we believe political dialogue is the only way to achieve the denuclearization of the region. In that connection, the development of mutual confidence-building measures is essential. We highlight the willingness shown by the Governments of the Republic of Korea and of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to begin negotiations in order to facilitate the attendance of a North Korean delegation in the upcoming Winter Olympics and the participation of both countries in the inaugural ceremony under the same flag.

Another success in the implementation of mutual confidence-building measures is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme, which was negotiated among the five permanent members of the Council, the European Union and the International Atomic Energy Agency. That development showed the readiness of the parties to reach a peaceful and consensus-based agreement.

As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Bolivia is firmly convinced that cooperation among States is critical to its implementation so as to avert non-State actors from acquiring or utilizing chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. We also note that the Committee is a platform for assistance among States, not a mechanism for coercion or to channel sanctions against States.

Finally, we look on with concern at multimillion dollar investments in the military-industrial complex. Those exorbitant sums could be used instead to face the grave humanitarian crisis, to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to eradicate poverty and inequality and to thereby build a more just and humane world.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We also are gratified to see you preside over the Security Council, Mr. President, and we commend Kazakhstan for its exceptional work during its presidency. My delegation welcomes the timely convening of this high-level debate on confidence-building measures needed to ensure the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and we thank President Nursultan Nazarbayev for his participation. We likewise note Kazakhstan's leadership in setting a bold example for the international community on nuclear disarmament. We also thank the Secretary-General for his salient briefing.

As expressed in the document entitled "Manifesto: the world, the twenty-first century", endorsed by President of Kazakhstan, nothing can be further from the objectives of peace, security and development than the grave threat of the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery. We agree with that vision and would like to share three comments accordingly.

First, Peru is committed to disarmament and the non-proliferation regimes on weapons of mass destruction. We believe that ensuring international peace and security means eliminating the risk posed by such weapons. There is no better means to do that than to guarantee their non-existence. As such, we must promote disarmament. Thanks to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, agreed at Tlatelolco, we are part of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region of the world. In line with such commitments, we call for the universalization of international instruments, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the recent Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which establishes the illegality of the use and possession of such weapons.

Secondly, Peru believes that the challenges faced by the nuclear non-proliferation regime are the gravest threats to peace and security worldwide today. Consequently, ensuring a united Council so as to enable an effective and consistent response to such challenges is, in our view, a priority. From our perspective, that requires first addressing the challenge posed by the nuclear and ballistic programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The nuclear non-proliferation regime must also be enforced through the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme — a prime example of the implementation of confidence-building measures as monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency. We also want to highlight the importance of preserving the commitment of the Council with regard to the unacceptable use of chemical weapons in Syria, with a view to fully investigating the facts and punishing the parties responsible.

Thirdly, in this complex context, Peru agrees that we must go beyond the imposition of sanctions. We must promote preventive diplomacy and build the necessary

trust to safeguard the non-proliferation regimes through a more comprehensive approach. Indeed, in many cases, distrust generates a perception of insecurity that, in turn, leads to increasing stockpiling of arms. We must address that perception in order to counter proliferation and arms stockpiling, particularly in the nuclear arena. In order to do so, creating open channels of communication and mutual understanding, devising open and transparent processes, setting up monitoring and verification mechanisms and crisis control protocols are, inter alia, confidence-building measures that make up a basic foundation for cooperation that will help mitigate the risk of escalation or accidents that could have grave consequences.

Today, as Peru has the privilege of receiving a visit by Pope Francis, we would like to conclude by recalling the message that His Holiness delivered on 25 September 2015 before the General Assembly with regard to the topic that brings us here today:

> "A system of ethics and laws based on the threat of mutual destruction, and possibly the destruction of all humankind, is a contradiction in terms and an affront to the entire edifice of the United Nations, which would become a group of nations united by fear and mistrust." (*A/70/PV.3, p. 5*)

**Mr. Skoog** (Sweden): It is good to see you back at the United Nations, Mr. President. I want to begin by thanking Kazakhstan for convening today's timely meeting on a very important issue. Your country's historic contribution to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is commendable. Indeed, by your decision, more than 25 years ago, to give up nuclear weapons, showed that nuclear disarmament is indeed possible. Your personal commitment to end nuclear testing and promote the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty deserves our thanks. It is a priority shared by my country and by all members of the European Union.

Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his thoughtful intervention this morning. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's new year's message that global anxieties about nuclear weapons are their highest level since the Cold War. Speculations in recent months about the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons are an unwelcome echo from the past.

Meanwhile, both State and non-State actors push the boundaries of our common values through the use of chemical weapons. There is no doubt that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a serious threat to international peace and security.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and mutually reinforcing. Making progress on both fronts must be a priority for the international community and for the Security Council. It is not only a moral and humanitarian responsibility, but also essential for our common security interests.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the indispensable framework and the cornerstone of global disarmament and non-proliferation. We are committed to the success of the current NPT review cycle. That will require making progress on all three pillars of the Treaty, including disarmament, concerning which the nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility. The widespread frustration within the international community regarding the lack of progress within the NPT context is real and well-founded. It needs to be addressed by concrete progress in the implementation of existing disarmament commitments.

Effective disarmament will require sincere negotiations in good faith within the framework of all existing conventions. We must all act according to our commitments and live up to our promises. On the path ahead, it is essential that we build mutual trust, as was stressed by the Secretary-General and President Nazarbayev earlier this morning, including by increasing understanding for each another's perspectives — something clearly lacking today. We must also mobilize the necessary political will to negotiate and compromise in order to reach a positive outcome.

The paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), which is now in its twenty-second year, should be a matter of concern for us all. Sweden will assume the rotating presidency of the CD next month. We will make every effort to define a combination of substantive issues based upon which a programme of work can finally be agreed and that we hope may help to break the deadlock.

We are also faced with the increasing threat of weapons of mass destruction being acquired by non-State actors. Collective efforts are needed to meet the evolving threats and uphold the global non-proliferation regime. All States must work to implement their obligations pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

Confidence-building measures can help reduce tensions, prevent conflicts and build the trust necessary for effective disarmament and non-proliferation. Such efforts are strengthened if they are based on the clear principles of accountability, transparency, irreversibility and verifiability. The nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia provides a good example of where those principles have been applied. It was the first zone of its kind to be based on verification according to the model additional protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That provided the IAEA with the ability to verify not only the non-diversion of declared nuclear material, but also the absence of undeclared nuclear material as well as activities in participating States.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is another important example of the potential of diplomacy. The JCPOA is designed to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme That crucial agreement contributes to stability within and beyond the region, and contributes significantly to strengthening the global non-proliferation architecture. As reiterated by High Representative of the European Union Federica Mogherini, and by many others around the table today, the European Union remains committed to supporting the full implementation of the JCPOA, and it is vital that all parties continue to implement their commitments. IAEA verification and the Joint Commission for addressing implementation matters are both indispensable components of the agreement. In addition, we look forward to Iran's early ratification of the additional protocol, which is essential to building confidence and ensuring sustainability.

The Council has repeatedly addressed the testing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in breach of international obligations and contrary to the existing global norm against nuclear testing embodied in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We continue to condemn those actions in the strongest terms. The full and comprehensive implementation of the Council's relevant resolutions by all United Nations States Members is needed. At the same time, sanctions alone will not solve the current crisis on the Korean peninsula. Efforts are needed to pave the way for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the conflict. In parallel to effectively implementing the sanctions regime, we must undertake further work to reduce tensions and build trust. We welcome the latest developments on the peninsula, including the steps taken to reopen channels of communication, such as military-to-military dialogue. That is an important means to avoid misunderstandings and reduce tensions. We also welcome the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to participate in the Olympic Games. Those are positive developments. It is important to seize that window of opportunity and support all efforts that can lead to denuclearization and peaceful relations on the Korean peninsula.

Stepped-up efforts are also needed to address the issue of chemical weapons. The use of such weapons in Syria and Iraq is illegal and unacceptable. There can be no impunity for such grave violations of international law. Those responsible must be identified and brought to justice. We deeply regret the multiple instances of the use of the veto in the Council, thereby hindering accountability. Recent allegations of the use of chlorine gas in Syria and ongoing investigations by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic serve only to further illustrate the need to continue our efforts to develop a new mechanism for attribution so as to ensure accountability and uphold the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The Council has a responsibility in that regard, and we will continue our efforts to find a way forward.

In his New Year's message, the Secretary-General urged leaders to bring people together around common goals. Surely, one of those goals must be furthering non-proliferation and disarmament. The Council must work together and enhance its efforts to promote and uphold progress, including by helping building confidence and trust among countries. We will continue to work actively will all partners to further disarmament, non-proliferation, respect for international law and accountability for those who violate international norms and obligations.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Kazakh presidency for organizing this important and equally timely meeting on confidence and transparency measures on weapons of mass destruction. It was a particular honour to have President Nazarbayev and President Duda present among us this morning, and I am very happy to see you, Mr. Minister here today once again. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his very enlightening briefing.

Almost a century ago, the atrocities resulting from the use of chemical weapons during the First World War led us to jointly initiate and develop, piece by piece, the current non-proliferation regime on weapons of mass destruction. That regime is today the backbone of the international security architecture. As the past year has tragically reminded us, it is nevertheless under attack and has been possibly put in jeopardy. The proliferation of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery remains a dangerous reality. In Asia and the Middle East, the most robust and fundamental non-proliferation and disarmament norms are systematically, and even flagrantly, violated. Let us make no mistake: the stakes are extremely high. Beyond the immediate implications concerning peace and security, what is at stake is long-term strategic stability, which implicates the security of all our States. That is why combating weapons of mass destruction is, and must remain, at the heart of the Security Council's priorities, and why France intends to remain committed to such a critical issue.

With the barbaric use of toxic chemical agents in Syria, Iraq and Asia, we are witnessing the deadly reappearance of weapons that sow fear and death among civilians. The use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its own people is but one tragic example of that. On behalf of France, I recall that trivializing that situation, owing to our failure to build an international consensus to find a solution for it, steadily increases the risk of chemical terrorism, which is something we all fear. It exacerbates regional instability and weakens the international security architecture, for which the Council is both the guardian and ultimate guarantor.

The same observation applies to North Korea's actions. The North Korean regime is determined to acquire an operational nuclear arsenal, in systematic and blatant violation of its obligations. The threat has reached a critical level and concerns us all. It is therefore necessary today, through the pressure being applied, to find a political solution so as to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The unity and resolute commitment of the Security Council are a prerequisite condition for success.

In such an uncertain and complex environment, trust and transparency at the regional and multilateral levels — among the priorities behind our meetings — are more than ever core values that we must safeguard and nurture. That is especially true with regard to the non-proliferation regime. As the Secretary-General recalled, it is based on binding commitments, followed by a rigorous verification of their implementation. That is in particular the role of such international bodies as the International Atomic Energy Agency and Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), whose work France actively supports.

I also reiterate our resolute commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — the fiftieth anniversary of which we will celebrate this year — as well as our firm opposition to any international initiative that might undermine it. I would also like to especially express our full support for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty as soon as possible. We call upon all countries that have not yet acceded to the Treaty to do so without delay — I refer in particular to countries whose accession is required.

France also supports the implementation by all of the commitments made under resolution 1540 (2004), adopted by the Council to prevent non-State actors from obtaining weapons of mass destruction. That is a topical issue because we are more than ever concerned about possible transfers to non-State entities, particularly in the area of missiles. In that respect, it is crucial that States that have not yet done so adopt export-control legislation and the corresponding administrative arrangements.

Lastly, as members are aware, France is very involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative. France intends to continue actively supporting non-proliferation efforts and, as I have said, remain proactive regarding the Initiative. France is convinced that with the determination of the international community, based on pragmatic and realistic multilateralism, it is possible to find solutions to the proliferation crises. Allow me, in that regard, to mention the Iranian case.

My country actively contributed to the development of the robust, solid and verifiable agreement that is now the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. As we have already said, we want rigorous implementation of that agreement and of resolution 2231 (2015). Taken together, those texts constitute the cornerstone of stability and regional and international security. Nevertheless, the agreement does not address all of our concerns, in particular with respect to Iran's ballistic activities. That is why we hope that frank dialogue will take place on the matter.

Similarly, the reinstatement of a total ban on the use of chemical weapons is urgently needed. Impunity cannot, and will not, be an option. That was the merit of the Joint Investigative Mechanism — the dissolution of which is particularly regrettable; however, we must not stand by idly. Criminals identified as having resorted to such weapons, whether State or non-State actors, should be punished, and those who might consider it deterred.

That is why France has decided to convene in Paris on 23 January countries that share that same concern, in order to effectively work together against the unacceptable impunity for the use of chemical weapons. A new intergovernmental partnership will be set up on that occasion, the purpose of which will be to assist and support existing mechanisms in their investigative work as well as international organizations, primarily the OPCW, which is in charge of that issue.

With the risk of erosion in the non-proliferation regime, it is our security as a whole, as well as the very existence of the rule of law as the foundation of multilateralism, that are in peril. In the light of the magnitude of the stakes, it is our collective responsibility to safeguard and strengthen the gains that together we have made, by building confidence and transparency among all parties respecting their non-proliferation commitments. France remains fully committed to that end.

**Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the presence at this Security Council meeting of His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, as well as that of the President of Poland, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific of the United Kingdom. The presence of such leaders confers particular prominence to our work. I would like to thank Kazakhstan for organizing this briefing on such a crucial subject. My delegation also extends its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his briefing and vision on this question, which has preoccupied the Organization and Council for many years.

Aware of the threat posed to humankind by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations established a series of instruments and multilateral mechanisms very early on, with the aim of reducing or eliminating all or part of those weapons in the long-term. Those instruments include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and various Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1540 (2004) as well as subsequent resolutions. Despite such existing mechanisms, the relevance of which is well established, it is clear that much remains to be done in the area of non-proliferation and the elimination of all such weapons.

Various recent issues — namely, the Iran nuclear deal, the North Korean nuclear and ballistic tests and the alleged use of chemical weapons by Islamic State terrorists — pose a challenge to the non-proliferation regime and require special attention and vigilance on the part of the Council. We must therefore go further collectively in the adoption of binding regimes for the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and in strengthening dialogue among States.

We must realize that, despite the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, that category of weapons of mass destruction is increasingly a growing threat. That is due to the fact that the major nuclear Powers have shied away from the Treaty and, in addition, have opposed the establishment of binding legal instruments, as called for by all other countries. The nuclear Powers must rally to the international consensus on the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and strengthen dialogue with other countries in the context of collective security guarantees. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire calls for a further reduction of all nuclear arsenals in order to discourage countries that are tempted to join the group of nuclear Powers.

In that context, nuclear-armed countries and other concerned countries must create the conditions for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in order to prevent the development of new nuclear weapons and the production of large quantities of fissile material and other nuclear waste. Beyond the agreements, the nuclear countries must provide the necessary guarantees with respect to the handling and storage of those materials, which constitute a real danger for the countries of the South, and also provide safety and nuclear security guarantees.

My country, which has made peace its guiding principle, certainly is in favour of a firm position, but we are not closed to ongoing dialogue on those issues. We also attach the highest importance to Africa remaining a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We also call on

the nuclear Powers and the African countries to combat the pollution of the continent by nuclear materials.

It is therefore important that the international community mobilize in support of the Iranian nuclear agreement, in accordance with resolution 2231 (2015), as the safest guarantee for preventing an arms race in the Middle East, with the clear threat of proliferation.

Similarly, the thaw in the relations between the two Koreas, following the tensions arising from the nuclear and ballistic tests by North Korea, is to be welcomed and encouraged through the opening of a comprehensive dialogue that includes all stakeholders in the crisis on the Korean peninsula. That thaw augurs well for the Olympic Winter Games in South Korea. It should be welcomed and encouraged in order to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Finally, allegations of the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria, if proved, would constitute a serious violation of the non-proliferation regime and a challenge to our collective security. The Council must reach agreement on that issue in order to allow for an investigation of the facts, in particular in Syria, and to bring to justice those found responsible.

True to its tradition of peace, Côte d'Ivoire has always advocated the settlement of all disputes through dialogue. It therefore follows that we ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 6 March 1973 and, on 20 July 2017, signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted by the General Assembly on 7 July 2017. The latter instrument is crucial to building a safer world and to guaranteeing the future of humankind, since the risk of a nuclear confrontation is no longer an academic theory.

Côte d'Ivoire will therefore continue to support global efforts to eradicate nuclear weapons and their means of delivery from the face of the Earth by helping to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and to expand its scope, on the one hand, and by ensuring the strict implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), in particular with regard to non-State actors, on the other hand. Our efforts to implement a global non-proliferation architecture would be in vain if they were not part of a comprehensive approach to strengthening cooperation and assistance among States, on the one hand, and between States and subregional, regional and international organizations, on the other.

That reasoning leads my country to recall the two pillars on which the Council's activities in that area are based, namely, the responsibility to establish a system for the regulation of armaments, as provided for in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, and the pursuit of a number of objectives, ranging from respect for the prohibition of the use of biological and chemical weapons to the prevention of the acquisition of such weapons by non-State actors, in accordance with the primary responsibility of the United Nations to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

In that perspective, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) could support States that so wish in strengthening their national capacities for sharing experiences and good practices. Strengthening national and regional capacities is all the more necessary given recent technological developments, including the miniaturization of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, which increase the risk of proliferation and the acquisition of such weapons by terrorist groups.

Like Kazakhstan, your country, Mr. President, whose commitment to building a world free of weapons of mass destruction is to be welcomed, the Ivorian delegation would like to reiterate the willingness of Côte d'Ivoire to fully implement the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes for weapons of mass destruction with a view to achieving a safer world free of nuclear weapons. We express our full support for your country's appeal to the permanent members of the Security Council to work to build of a nuclear-free world by 2045, which coincides with the centenary of the Organization.

Côte d'Ivoire also supports the call for nuclear States to refrain from the first use nuclear weapons in the case of conflict.

Finally, my country welcomes the holding in May of the United Nations high-level conference on nuclear disarmament, which is clearly a key step in the process of establishing a global non-proliferation regime and completely eliminating nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia): We express our appreciation to the Kazakh presidency for organzing this high-level briefing on a very important issue, which has been at the top of the Security Council agenda for the past year. We were very pleased to see the President of Kazakhstan presiding over this meeting as the leader of a country that decided not to have nuclear weapons on

its territory. He made a wise decision in that regard, and we appreciate his vision and wisdom on that important issue. We are always appreciative of the Secretary-General for his briefings. We are also very pleased to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan presiding over the meeting at this point.

Since the end of the Cold War, the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons has never been as deeply worrying as it is today. We all know the unimaginable potential danger that humankind would face should the non-proliferation regime be further weakened. That is why a world free of nuclear weapons is an important objective, which we in Ethiopia fully support and subscribe to, as do many States Members of the United Nations. We are also party to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty.

Moreover, we recognize the challenge that the world faces today with regard to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the fact that the international norm set by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is being seriously tested. The question before us today, therefore, is what can be done to respond to the current challenges and to preserve that important international norm. We believe that the issues raised in the concept note (S/2018/4, annex) in terms of prevention and confidence-building measures are very timely and relevant.

Let me stress that we deeply appreciate the proposals made by the President of Kazkahstan in that regard. In our view, it is important to comprehensively address risks of proliferation through political and diplomatic means aimed at finding a negotiated solution. For example, we believe that the manner in which the States participating in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) managed to address the Iranian nuclear issue is a significant achievement for multilateralism. Of course, we recognize that much more needs to be done to resolve misunderstandings and to prevent any possible obstacles to the full implementation of the JCPOA.

We believe, as the Secretary-General stated, that issues not directly related to the JCPOA should be addressed without prejudice to the provisions of the Agreement and its accomplishments. We therefore hope that the participating countries will continue to uphold their commitment to that important deal, which has enormous significance to international peace and security within the international non-proliferation regime. We believe that it is essential to adopt confidence-building measures in order to build trust among the participating States, and we hope that the President will take steps in that direction.

Based on the lessons learned from the Iranian nuclear deal, it is important to explore ways and means of addressing the serious threat posed by the nuclear and ballistic missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is increasingly apparent that there is no other option but a peaceful and diplomatic path to resolving the crisis in the Korean peninsula. It is for that reason that priority should be given to easing heightened tensions and avoiding the risk of miscalculation. In that regard, we welcome the recent high-level intra-Korean talks and the agreement reached to ease military tensions, hold military-to-military talks and reopen the inter-Korean military hotline, which we hope will help to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula. We also welcome the agreement reached between the United States and the Republic of Korea to postpone their joint military exercises.

Undeniably, such developments are encouraging and should facilitate the resumption of serious dialogue. At this stage, it is important to create an atmosphere conducive to the holding of such dialogue. We hope that the Winter Olympic Games will be instrumental in promoting that kind of atmosphere and in building confidence. We welcome the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to send its delegation to the Winter Olympic Games, and we also appreciate the Secretary-General's decision to attend the opening ceremony of the Games. On the other hand, we are under no illusion that resolving the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be easy. It is absolutely important that all sides start to take small but meaningful steps to build the necessary trust and confidence that could help pave the way for the resumption of dialogue and negotiation towards finding a comprehensive and lasting solution to the issue surrounding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and denuclearizing the Korean peninsula. We must take serious note of the proposal by the President on this matter.

That brings me to my third point on the broader threat to international peace and security and to humankind posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including by non-State actors. Multilateral agreements, such as the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

continue to contribute immensely to the prevention and elimination of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including into the hands of non-State actors and terrorist groups. Nonetheless, much remains to be done to ensure the universal accession to and the full implementation of such agreements. Regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, also remain central to the global and regional non-proliferation regimes in the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Security Council plays a critical role in addressing the serious threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by using all the available tools at its disposal, including sanctions. As we have seen over the past year, the unity of the Council is absolutely critical to addressing non-proliferation issues, and everything must be done to preserve it. It is also important to ensure that the various decisions and measures taken by the Council are adhered to by all Member States. With regard to advocacy and follow-up, the role of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council remains vital.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Ethiopia's commitment to upholding the international non-proliferation regime and fulfilling its obligations in implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions without fail.

**Mr. Wu Haitao** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Kazakhstan for its initiative to convene today's Security Council meeting on non-proliferation.

China thanks His Excellency President Nazarbayev for presiding over today's meeting. We also welcome Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister back to New York.

We thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing.

Peace and development remain two main contemporary issues. However, our world has yet to achieve peace. Regional hotspots continue to emerge and traditional and non-traditional security threats are on the rise. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems constitute genuine threats to international peace, security and stability and are common challenges faced by the international community.

Owing to the international community's efforts in recent years, consensus has been reached on the international non-proliferation regime. The regime is increasingly enhanced by the improved capacity of States and greater in-depth cooperation. We must acknowledge that proliferation risks and challenges remain severe. Some non-proliferation hotspot issues are protracted and intractable. Technological advances have lowered the threshold for proliferation. The risk of non-State actors, and terrorists in particular, acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction is increasing. The authority, universality and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime must be enhanced urgently.

President Xi Jinping of China has stressed that no country can respond on its own to the fiercest challenges facing humankind and or return to self-imposed isolation. We urge the people of the world to work together to build a shared destiny for humankind and a world that is open, inclusive, clean and beautiful, with lasting peace, universal security and shared prosperity. China is of the view that strengthening global governance in the area of non-proliferation is an important component for building a shared destiny for humankind. The international community must therefore enhance cooperation and coordination in many dimensions.

First, a commitment to achieving common security is vital. Non-proliferation is in essence a security issue. Security concerns are the main drivers of proliferation activities. All countries should reject the Cold War mentality, remain resolute in adhering to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, foster a concept of shared, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, build a new form of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation, and create a security trend that features fairness and justice, joint contributions and common benefits. The United Nations and the Security Council should bring into full play their essential role in ending war and maintaining peace, finding a path to effectively prevent conflicts, and building enduring peace in order to achieve common security for all countries. That will fundamentally eliminate the drivers of proliferation. It is also a fundamental way for all countries to build confidence.

Secondly, it is important to commit to the peaceful resolution of issues by political and diplomatic means. Confrontation and unrelenting sanctions and pressure will lead only to the escalation of conflict and the increased risk of proliferation. All countries should remain on the path to the peaceful resolution of conflict

and strive to resolve non-proliferation hotspot issues by political and diplomatic means.

At present, some positive changes have emerged on the Korean peninsula. All parties should make a concerted effort to maintain the hard-won momentum of reduced tensions, create the conditions for relaunching dialogue and negotiations and return the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula to dialogue and negotiation.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran is a hard-won and important accomplishment of multilateralism. It is also a model for resolving international hotspot issues by political and diplomatic means. The relevant parties should bear in mind their overall situation and long-term interests, maintain their political will, manage differences properly and continue to comprehensively and effectively implement the JCPOA.

Thirdly, there must be a commitment to consolidating and developing the international non-proliferation regime. With the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, Biological Weapons Convention and resolution 1540 (2004) as its legal bases, and with international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as its institutional mechanisms, the international non-proliferation regime is an important component of the global security order and has played a vital role in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and in maintaining global strategic balance and stability. The international community should effectively maintain the universality, authority and effectiveness of the regime, continue to improve relevant international norms, adhere to equality before norms, and discard double standards and elective practices. The international non-proliferation regime founded on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be maintained, and whoever acquires nuclear weapons illegally must effectively comply with the obligation to denuclearize.

Fourthly, with respect to the commitment to enhancing States' non-proliferation capacities, the primary responsibility for non-proliferation should be assumed by Governments. Non-proliferation policies developed in accordance with country-specific situations should be respected and supported in order to push for continuous improvement of non-proliferation laws and regulations and to strengthen capacity-building in enforcement. All countries should, in the spirit of openness, inclusion, mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, conduct exchanges and practical cooperation in non-proliferation so as to jointly enhance their capacity and the level of non-proliferation. The needs of developing countries for international non-proliferation assistance should be effectively met. At the same time, a comprehensive and balanced approach should be put in place to promote non-proliferation and the use of science and technology for peaceful purposes. Non-proliferation should not be used as an excuse to limit or deprive countries of their rights to use science and technology for peaceful purposes and to promote international cooperation.

China has consistently advocated for peace, development and cooperation in order to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and support the prevention of conflicts. China is firmly opposed to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. China has acceded to all international conventions and joined relevant international organizations in the field of non-proliferation. China has built a complete system of non-proliferation and export control and ensured the effective implementation of relevant laws and regulations. China comprehensively and fully implements relevant Council resolutions, actively participates in international and regional cooperation on non-proliferation, supports the United Nations in playing its role in non-proliferation, and commits to pushing for a political solution to non-proliferation hotspot issues.

China constructively participated in the negotiation and implementation process of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran and put forward its own proposals.

China has work tirelessly to promote a negotiated solution to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. China's suspension-for-suspension initiative and two-track approach, as well as the road map jointly proposed by China and Russia, are realistic and feasible for appropriately resolving the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula. China hopes for a positive response and support from all sides on this. A denuclearized, peaceful and stable Korean peninsula is in the interest of all parties. The unity of the international community on this issue is critical. China would like to work with the international community, engage in close communication, display mutual confidence and mutual respect, and strengthen cooperation in pursuing

continued progress towards a suitable solution to the Korean peninsula issue.

Non-proliferation is a long-term task before the international community. It requires the involvement of all countries. China is a builder of world peace and a guardian of the international non-proliferation regime. China would like to continue to work with all parties in making a greater contribution to enhancing the international non-proliferation regime, advancing global governance in non-proliferation and building a common destiny of humankind.

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands): Let me first express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, and the Republic of Kazakhstan for convening this meeting on this very important topic. We commend Kazakhstan for its continued leadership role in this area. On a personal note, allow me to add that it is a pleasure to see you, Minister Abdrakhmanov, back in New York and presiding over the Council. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his very informative briefing.

As declared repeatedly by the Council, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, the Kingdom of the Netherlands attaches the greatest importance to making every effort to prevent the use, stop the spread and ultimately achieve a world free of weapons of mass destruction. In that light, I will make three main points here today, concerning the importance of the non-proliferation architecture, the need for attention for implementation, and the need for activities to strengthen the architecture.

On my first point, achieving a world without weapons of mass destruction starts with the current non-proliferation architecture — that is, the international regimes and norms that underpin our efforts against proliferation. The NPT is the cornerstone of the international regime to prevent nuclear proliferation and to work towards nuclear disarmament. Chemical and biological weapons are fully banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. The Hague is the proud host of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. As the Polish President mentioned earlier, we attach great value to The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.

However, proliferation concerns are not restricted to States alone. Non-State actors represent a growing threat when it comes to weapons and materials of mass destruction. We must make every effort to prevent such weapons and materials from falling into the hands of terrorists. This, of course, is the purview of resolution 1540 (2004). This comprehensive architecture of non-proliferation norms and obligations is the foundation of international peace and security.

This brings me to my second point. We must pay constant attention to the implementation of our obligations, because clearly the non-proliferation architecture is not free from violations. It is imperative that all countries fulfil their commitments in order to bring us closer to the goal of a world free of weapons of mass destruction. We have to work persistently to universalize, implement, verify and enforce the international non-proliferation norms. Non-compliance must always be addressed and enforcement measures have to be taken. Doing so, and doing so effectively, will also strengthen international confidence in the architecture.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is a milestone accomplishment of international diplomacy and has proven to be a success, as verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency. It is essential that all parties continue to fulfil their commitments under the JCPOA. As facilitator for resolution 2231 (2015), I look forward to working with all parties to ensure full and comprehensive implementation of the resolution. I welcome the suggestion just made by our French colleague for a frank dialogue with Iran on related issues.

When States fail to live up to their obligations and endanger international peace and security, we must act with common purpose to find diplomatic solutions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has repeatedly defied its international obligations. Its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes threaten not just regional, but also global stability and security. The international community has been swift and strong in its condemnation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's actions and the Council has imposed the heaviest sanctions ever. To make these sanctions work, we need scrupulous and worldwide implementation. As Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), I am working with all parties to this end, building on the work of Italy, our split-term party in 2017-2018. Of course, as others have said, we welcome recent developments of increased contacts

between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria, especially by the Government, as well as by terrorist groups, is another grave violation of international norms and is unacceptable. We regret the dismantling of the Organiation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. We must ensure accountability for such acts, lest we undermine the rule of law and the humanity that underpin the United Nations system. Let me recall in this context the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

Turning to my third point, we must engage in new activities to further strengthen the non-proliferation architecture. The first example is the cycle of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). While obstacles remain, the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee set us on the path towards a successful review cycle. As Chair of the first Preparatory Committee, we found that, even when different States and regions have different priorities, support for the NPT remains strong. We should build on this support to preserve our common ground and reach our shared goals.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands also values initiatives aimed at facilitating cooperation and dialogue. We promote progress towards a fissile material cut-off treaty and support the important work being done on the topic of nuclear disarmament verification. We call on all States to make every effort to realize the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We must continue to push for the full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), and we should support the work of international organizations and actively engage in multilateral initiatives, such as the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

In conclusion, only together can we maintain and strengthen international norms against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That will require implementing our commitments and complying with our obligations under the relevant treaty regimes. It will require building upon our commitments to further strengthening the non-proliferation architecture. And it will require addressing and enforcing issues of non-compliance, collectively and effectively. These steps will serve to build confidence. They will serve to enhance international peace and security, and help to prevent conflict, which is a fundamental responsibility of the Council.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The presence of persons of note at this meeting of the Security Council is a testament to the great importance of the topic under consideration — the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As such, we wish to congratulate and thank Kazakhstan for including this issue in its programme of work. We also thank Secretary-General Guterres for sharing his prescient ideas.

This report is timely, as recent world events indicate a difficult year for multilateral action on disarmament and international peace and security. Last year, we saw renewed efforts to address a broad spectrum of issues related to non-proliferation, multilateral disarmament and international security, including far-reaching questions on cyberspace and outer space activities. International security has continued to deteriorate as the world faces immense peace and security challenges. In that regard, I wish to underline the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security, and reiterate that there is no substitute for a multilateral approach to addressing global issues of disarmament in a sustainable manner, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As the international community continues to await the realization of the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, we seek broader and more concrete measures in the pursuit of the goal of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. It is evident that the current approach has not managed to offer tangible results that ensure the realization of the goal and the general objectives of a world without weapons of mass destruction.

On 20 September 2017, the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was opened for signature. Its adoption was a welcome development in our search for a world free of weapons of mass destruction. I want to emphasize that the TPNW underlines our shared commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Both

treaties complement each other and establish a clear path towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

Equatorial Guinea is well aware that, in order to achieve significant progress in the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, there must be practical and comprehensive confidence-building measures. Indeed, all Member States, particularly nuclear-weapon States, must commit to the existing regimes of transparency, dialogue and verifiable notifications of military reserves and activities.

More than 70 years have passed since the world witnessed the terrifying power of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The destruction and impact of the twin bombs still resonate today. The unfortunate incidents left a legacy of devastation and long-term negative impact on the environment and, fundamentally, on the lives of the people affected. Therefore, the time has come for the world to unequivocally and unanimously express the goal of ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It is also time to raise our voices against the slow pace of nuclear disarmament and to call on all Member States to comply with the legal obligations and the implementation of the commitments assumed by the nuclear-weapon States.

For Equatorial Guinea, the highest priority remains nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. To that end, the contribution of nuclear-weapon-free zones to the objectives of the NPT, including nuclear disarmament, as well as other contributions to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all regions of the world, should be maintained and expanded.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the nuclear-weapon-free zone of Central Asia, as well as the nuclear-weapon-free State of Mongolia, contribute significantly to achieving the general objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. They improve global and regional peace and security, strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contribute to the realization of the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

In that context, the Government of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its ongoing commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba, which entered into force on 15 July 2009. The Treaty reaffirms, inter alia, the status of Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and shields Africa by avoiding the parking of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of such weapons throughout the African continent.

This year will mark the thirty-second anniversary of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, based in Lomé. Despite its limited resources, the Centre has continued to offer technical assistance to States throughout the African region. In 2015, the Centre oversaw the participation of more than 1,000 representatives of Governments and regional organizations, as well as more than 2,000 members of civil society through a wide range of activities. The Centre needs help in promoting its mandate. We welcome the Centre's efforts and its management, and we take this opportunity to request more alliances and more assistance to boost its efforts and ensure that it fulfils its mandate.

My country emphasizes the importance of continued respect for the inalienable right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and highlights the central role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in that regard, through the ongoing commitments of States to the implementation of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards System and the provision of technical assistance and cooperation.

We also stress humanitarian considerations in the context of deliberations on weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the light of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use or detonation of nuclear weapons, either by accident or as a deliberate measure. We therefore stress the importance of General Assembly resolution 70/47 and call on all States, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to take into account the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons on human health, the environment and vital economic resources, inter alia, and to take the necessary measures to dismantle and give up these weapons. It is in this context that I once again welcome the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons does not guarantee security; rather, they subtract from it. Our world, including outer space, must be free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It is in this context that my country

insists on the need for nuclear-weapon States to stop modernizing, renewing or extending the life of their nuclear weapons and related facilities.

In Equatorial Guinea, we also underscore the importance of achieving universal accession to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), taking into account the special responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States in this regard. Our delegation welcomes the convening of the eighth Ministerial Conference on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York on 21 September 2016, and supports the international community in remaining committed to the promotion of the CTBT. We call on all nuclear-weapon States, those States that have not yet acceded to the NPT, those that are listed in annex 2 of the CTBT, and those that have not yet signed or ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so without delay.

Equatorial Guinea reaffirms the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament and expresses its concern at the many years of stalemate that have prevented the Conference from fulfilling its mandate as the single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum. I call on the Conference on Disarmament to resume its substantive work, bearing in mind the security interests of all States and without further delay.

Furthermore, we are concerned that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has been unable to reach consensus on recommendations since 1999. Nevertheless, I welcome the adoption in April 2017 of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. Indeed, it is important to stress the importance, not only of preserving the Commission, but also of achieving its negotiating goals.

**The President**: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Like other members of the Security Council, I too am pleased to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan presiding over today's meeting, which is dedicated to strengthening confidence-building measures. Unfortunately, around the world and in the Security Council in particular, there is indeed insufficient confidence and insufficient trust, and that is evident. What kind of trust or confidence can there be if some countries — and given that Russia was mentioned by name, I will take the liberty to mention them by name: the United States and the United Kingdom — continue to manipulate the Security Council and the social sentiment of the international community?

Perhaps their statements were written in advance, and they did not have sufficient time to revise their drafts after they had heard our statement. But, no, this is being done deliberately. We are deliberately not being heard, and our positions are being distorted. They erroneously claim that we are responsible for closing the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) because we vetoed the draft resolution on its extension. However, they shamefully forget to mention that we proposed a draft resolution that would have extended the JIM and improve its effectiveness, efficiency, professionalism and impartiality, which they did not allowed to be adopted. We proposed that draft resolution because the JIM completely discredited itself with a mendacious report that withstood no criticism.

I would ask a couple of rhetorical questions. Who in essence vetoed our draft resolution, and who was the last to do it? It is those very countries — the United States and the United Kingdom — that, without blinking an eye, are today accusing us of doing this. Who closed the JIM? I will say once again what was already repeatedly said in consultations on the Syrian chemical-weapons dossier: Stop your games at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons — we know the aim of those games — and demonstrate your readiness to establish a genuinely independent and professional mechanism, if you want honest cooperation, and not a smokescreen for political manipulation". The needed trust would then emerge.

There should be no illusions about this. We need a new mechanism that is approved by the Security Council. In our view, any other alternatives or agreements in a narrow format will be illegitimate.

**The President**: The representative of the United Kingdom has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Field** (United Kingdom): I simply would like to restate the facts of which everyone in the Security Council is well aware: Russia was — and we accept this fact — a key player in creating the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). We were very delighted to see that it played its full role in that regard. The Security Council will recall that Russia voted to establish the

JIM (resolution 2235 (2015)). It voted in favour of a report and resolutions that set out the very detailed methodology that the JIM was to follow.

This was an independent expert body. It then made a key undisputed finding of fact: the fact that the Syrian regime — the regime of Al-Assad — had gassed its own people. These were the facts that Russia then did not like and so it was on that basis that it chose to veto the JIM, and in so doing, it set back the whole issue of non-proliferation and all of our efforts and destroyed a global consensus against the use of chemical weapons. This is very dangerous precedent, as I said in my original comments. It was also, I think, a sad day for us all here in the Security Council, but most importantly it was a calamity for the Syrian people.

I would therefore simply urge Russia to use the very considerable influence that it wields to stop Al-Assad from using chemical weapons in future and to comply with his country's obligations. We recognize that Russia is playing an important part in the Iranian issue, so it is not that Russia is being obstructive across the board, but in relation to the Syrian matter, as I said, with an expert independent body that came up with a report that Russia did not like, it sought to veto it, which sends an extremely dangerous signal for future nuclear proliferators and one that I think we should all roundly condemn.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*